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When all is ready a man who has volunteered to sing the first song takes his stand at the sounding-board, and sings his song through. When he reaches the chorus the women take it up and repeat it after him, and as they do so each woman marks time by clapping her hands on the hollow formed by her thighs, the legs being crossed one over the other at the ankle. The singer continues to sing, thus leading the chorus, and at the same time marks the time of the song by beating on the sounding-board with his foot. As soon as the chorus begins the dancers begin to dance. The step of each dancer is the same, but there is very little attempt to form a figure. When the singer and the chorus get tired, the singing ceases, but the man at the sounding-board continues to mark time for the dancers. The singer repeats his song several times, and he may sing several songs, each repeated several times. When he gets tired he is relieved by another man. In a dance that lasts for any time, one singer succeeds another, and the singing and dancing are kept up continuously, sometimes for five or six hours.

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The above description applies to all the tribes of the Great Andaman, but there are some differences between the four tribes of the North Andaman, and the tribes of the Middle and South Andaman.

In the North Andaman the song is sung through once from beginning to end by the singer, and is then repeated three or four times by the chorus. In the South Andaman each song consists of one verse and a refrain, if we may speak of them thus. The singer sings the verse and the refrain, and then the refrain only is repeated an indefinite number of times by the chorus.

In the dance of the Southern tribes, each dancer dances alternately on the right foot or on the left. When dancing on the right foot the first movement is a slight hop with the right foot, then the left foot is raised and brought down with a backward scrape along the ground, then another hop on the right foot. These three movements, which occupy the time of two beats of the song, are repeated until the right leg is tired, and the dancer then changes the movement to a hop with the left foot, followed by a scrape with the right and another hop with the left. The time of the movement is as follows, the upper line being the

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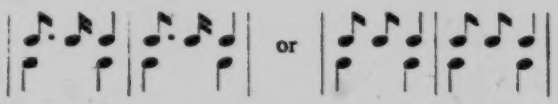
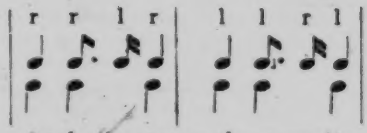
rhythm of the dance, while the lower line shows the beats of the song, which is marked on the sounding-board and by the clapping of the women.



The body of the dancer is bent slightly forward from the hips, the legs being flexed at the knees and the back being curved well inwards. There are several ways of holding the hands and arms, one of the commonest being to hold the arms outstretched in front on a level with the shoulders, while the thumb and forefinger of one hand are interlocked with those of the other. When a man does not wish to cease altogether from dancing but desires to have a short rest, he marks the time by raising each heel alternately from the ground. As a man dances he remains in one spot for a short time, and then, still continuing the same step, moves for a yard or two around the circle of the dancing ground. Every now and then a dancer is to be seen trotting from one position to another across the dancing ground, abandoning the step of the dance, but still keeping time to the song.

The Northern tribes have now adopted the same kind of dance as the tribes of the South, but formerly their dance was slightly different. There was a little more attempt at forming a figure, the dancers moving for the most part in a circle, some in one direction and others in the other. The step was as follows: a step forward with the right foot, a hop on the right foot, a scrape with the left, then another hop with the right, a step forward with the left foot, a hop with the left, a scrape with the right and a hop with the left. The rhythm is as follows:—



The lower line shows the beats on the sounding-board.

Some of the dancers occasionally break into the regular Southern step. A dancer sometimes changes from the usual

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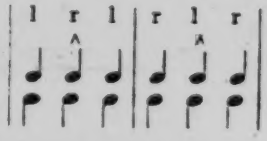
step to another called *k̲oi*, in which each foot is alternately struck on the ground and scraped backwards. Other slight variations of the movement may be introduced. 535 533●

In both the Southern and the Northern dance each dancer pleases himself as to the direction in which he moves, and the step that he adopts at any given moment. All the dancers, however independently of one another they dance, keep strict time to the music.

Women do not, as a rule, join in the ordinary dances held in the evening. Their share in the entertainment consists of forming the chorus. When they do dance, as they do on certain occasions, such as the dance at the end of mourning, their step is different from that of the men. In the Southern tribes the female dancer stands at one spot with knees flexed and lifts her heels alternately from the ground in time to the music, thus producing a slight swaying or swinging motion of the hips. After dancing thus at one spot for a few moments, she moves forward a few steps to a new position, keeping time to the music in all her movements, and then repeats the same performance. The arms are swung in time to the dance, or else are held before the breast with one wrist crossed over the other.

In the Northern tribes the common dance of the women is a sort of modification of that of the men. A woman advances across the ground in regular time, but at every third step she gives a peculiar little hop which has something of the effect of a bobbing curtsey. The time is as follows :—



l and r standing for left and right foot, and the accent indicating the hop or curtsey. Every now and then a dancer stops and remains at one spot, alternately scraping each foot backwards, holding her knees flexed, and swinging both arms together.

The ordinary dance of the Andamanese, as described above, must always be accompanied by a song, and the purpose of every song is to serve as the accompaniment to a dance. Every man 533

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533 composes his own songs. No one would ever sing (at a dance) a song composed by any other person. There are no traditional songs. Women occasionally compose songs, but I never heard a woman sing at a dance except in the chorus.

Every man composes songs, and the boys begin to practise themselves in the art of composition when they are still young. A man composes his song as he cuts a canoe or a bow or as he paddles a canoe, singing it over softly to himself, until he is satisfied with it. He then awaits an opportunity to sing it in public, and for this he has to wait for a dance. Before the dance he takes care to teach the chorus to one or two of his female relatives so that they can lead the chorus of women. He sings his song, and if it is successful he repeats it several times, and thereafter it becomes part of his repertory, for every man of any age has a repertory of songs that he is prepared to repeat at any time. If the song is not successful, if the chorus and dancers do not like it, the composer abandons it and does not repeat it. Some men are recognized as being more skilful song-makers than others.

The songs all deal with everyday subjects such as hunting or cutting a canoe. The important thing about a song is not its sense, but its sound, i.e., its rhythm and melody. A translation of an *Akar-Bale* song, which is quite typical, is "*Poio*, the son of *Mam Golat*, wants to know when I am going to finish my canoe. He comes every day. That is why I make haste to get it launched as soon as possible." Another on the same subject runs: "Knots are very hard to cut with an adze. They blunt the edge of the adze. How hard I am working cutting these knots." The singer here refers to the cutting of a canoe. A number of songs in the native languages with translations, are given by Mr Portman[1]. To these the reader may refer for further information.

535 628 301 According to the statements of the natives it was formerly the custom to have a dance before setting out to a fight. There was no special war-dance, the warriors joining in an ordinary dance such as has just been described. Those who intended

[1] Portman, *Notes on the Languages of the South Andaman Group of Tribes*, pp. 166—188.

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scope to be handled in such an essay as this. For our present purpose we are concerned with the dance only as a form of social ceremonial. 182X 535

If an Andaman Islander is asked why he dances he gives an answer that amounts to saying that he does so because he enjoys it. Dancing is therefore in general a means of enjoyment. It is frequently a rejoicing. The Andaman Islanders dance after a successful day of hunting; they do not dance if their day has been one of disappointment.

Pleasurable mental excitement finds its natural expression in bodily activity, as we see most plainly in young children and in some animals. And in its turn mere muscular activity is itself a source of pleasure. The individual shouts and jumps for joy; the society turns the jump into a dance, the shout into a song.

The essential character of all dancing is that it is rhythmical, and it is fairly evident that the primary function of this rhythmical nature of the dance is to enable a number of persons to join in the same actions and perform them as one body. In the Andamans at any rate it is clear that the spectacular dance (such as the performance described on page 164) is a late development out of the common dance. And it is probable that the history of the dance is everywhere the same, that it began as a common dance in which all present take some active part, and from this first form (still surviving in our ball-room dances) arose the spectacular dance in which one or more dancers perform before spectators who take no part themselves.

In the Andamans the song is an accompaniment of the dance. The dancing and singing and the marking of the rhythm by clapping and by stamping on the sounding-board are all parts of the one common action in which all join and which for convenience is here spoken of as the dance. It is probable that here again the Andamanese practice shows us the earliest stage in the development of the song, that song and music at first had no independent existence but together with dancing formed one activity. It is reasonable to suppose that the song first came into general use in human society because it provides a means by which a number of persons can utter the same series of sounds 182X 533

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X 182
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together and as with one voice, this being made possible by the fixed rhythm and the fixed pitch of the whole song and of each part of it (i.e. by melody). Once the art of song was in existence its further development was doubtless largely dependent upon the esthetic pleasure that it is able to give. But in the Andamans the esthetic pleasure that the natives get from their simple and monotonous songs seems to me of quite secondary importance as compared with the value of the song as a joint social activity.

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The movements of the ordinary Great Andaman dance do not seem to me to be in themselves expressive, or at any rate they are not obviously mimetic like the movements of the dances of many primitive folk. Their function seems to be to bring into activity as many of the muscles of the body as possible. The bending of the body at the hips and of the legs at the knees, with the slightly backward poise of the head and the common position of the arms held in line with the shoulders with the elbows crooked and the thumb and first finger of each hand clasping those of the other, produce a condition of tension of a great number of the muscles of the trunk and limbs. The attitude is one in which all the main joints of the body are between complete flexion and complete extension so that there is approximately an equal tension in the opposing groups of flexor and extensor muscles. Thus the whole body of the dancer is full of active forces balanced one against another, resulting in a condition of flexibility and alertness without strain.

While the dance thus brings into play the whole muscular system of the dancer it also requires the activity of the two chief senses, that of sight to guide the dancer in his movements amongst the others and that of hearing to enable him to keep time with the music. Thus the dancer is in a condition in which all the bodily and mental activities are harmoniously directed to one end.

Finally, in order to understand the function of the Andamanese dance it must be noted that every adult member of the community takes some part in it. All the able-bodied men join in the dance itself; all the women join in the chorus. If anyone through ill-health or old age is unable to take any active part,

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192 owing to a variety of circumstances, not the least of which was
the absence of any system of representing the sounds in the
114 language—each author having chosen to employ a phonetic code best understood by himself and capable of varying interpretation by others—the result has been, to say the least, unsatisfactory, and the words for the most part are, in their printed form, either wholly unrecognisable by the people themselves, or possess a meaning differing very much from that given.

2. I do not make these remarks with a view of depreciating the efforts of others, for I fully recognise the difficulties with which they had to contend, and am aware that these exceeded any I have had to overcome, consequent on the improved relations which have subsisted between ourselves and the aborigines in recent years.

3. It must also be borne in mind that time necessarily works vast changes in all savage languages, which depend so entirely upon the oral correctness of the whole population for their accurate transmission.

128 4. As my knowledge of the other dialects is not as yet sufficient for me to be able to describe them comparatively at any length—leisure having failed me to obtain more than a few hundred words of five of the seven remaining tribes of Great Andaman—I wish it to be understood that, except where otherwise stated, my remarks refer to the *.bō·jig-ngī·ji-*, or South Andaman dialect.

192 5. The Andamanese are, as a rule, very conservative, and prefer to coin from their own resources rather than to borrow from aliens, words expressing ideas or objects which are new to them. To give only one of many examples:—having themselves no forms of worship, they had no word for "prayer," but since seeing the Mahomedans at their daily devotions, and learning that they are addressing an Invisible Being, they express the act by a compound word, *â·rlalik-yâ·b-*, signifying "daily repetition" (viz.: *â·rla-* daily, and *ik-yâ·b-* repetition).

533 6. They have also a distinct poetical dialect, and in their
195 songs subordinate everything to rhythm, the greatest liberties being thereby taken not only with the forms of their words, but even with the grammatical construction of the sentences. For instance the chorus of one of their songs runs thus:—

.Kēklū yâ lak·u mēj·rà?

which means "who missed the hard (backed) turtle?" the prose construction of the sentence being *mij·a yâ·dī chē·balen lâ·kàchī·re?* It will be at once noticed how great is the difference between the two versions, for in this, as in most of their songs,

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the words in their poetic form are so mutilated to suit the metre as to be scarcely recognisable; indeed, it not unfrequently happens that the composer of a new song has to explain its meaning in the ordinary vernacular to his chorus[1] as well as to the audience in general.

7. It may perhaps interest some of my readers to see a comparative table which I have prepared of the various forms of the possessive pronominal adjectives in most frequent use among five of the eight tribes of Great Andaman:

	.bō·jig-ngī·ji-	*.bō·jig-yâ·b-*	*.d·kà-kó·l-*	*.ko-jū·wai-*	*.bal·awa-*
my ..	*dī·a-* ..	*ī·ya-* ..	*ī·ya* ..	*ī·ya* ..	*deg·e.*
thy ..	*ngī·a-* .	*ngī·ya-* ..	*ngī·ya* ..	*ngī·ya* ..	*ngeg·e.*
his ..	*ī·a-* ..	*ī·ya-* ..	*ī·ya* ..	*dī·ya* ..	*eg·e.*
our ..	*mē·ta-* ..	*mī·ya-* ..	*mī·ya* ..	*mī·ya* ..	*mâ·tat.*
your ..	*ē·ta-* ..	*ngàrdī·ra-* *ī·ya-* ..	*ngàrdī·ra-* *tē·ya* ..	*ngachâ·par-* *ī·ya* ..	*ngâ·tat.*
their ..	*ó·nta-* ..	*nó·ngtâ·le-* *ī·ya-* ..	*ó·ntâ·le-* *eka-tē·ya* ..	*narâ·ngòich-* *ī·ya* ..	*â·tat.*

8. There are in each dialect several other forms of possessive pronominal adjectives, each of which must be used with its own class of nouns, but I do not now purpose entering into particulars regarding these. The form which, roughly speaking, is of general application among the *.bō·jig-ngī·ji-* is, as I have just shown, that of *dī·a-*, *ngī·a-*, &c. Ex.:—*dī·a kâ·rama-*, my bow; *mē·ta yâ·dī-*, our turtle; the exceptions to its use being, (*a*) those nouns denoting human objects, (*b*) those indicating the various parts of the body,[2] and (*c*) certain other nouns denoting degrees of relationship. To be as brief as possible, I will give but one or two examples of each.

(*a*)

dī·a-, my	*mē·tat*, our	Ex. *dī·a àbē·la-*, my man.
ngī·a-, thy	*ē·tat*, your	*mē·tat at-pail-*, our women.
ī·a-, his	*ó·ntat*, their	
l'i.a-, ——'s	*l'ó·ntat*, ——s'	

[1] I cannot here enter into particulars regarding their songs and choruses, an account of which will be hereafter given under "Games and Amusements."

[2] For a complete list of these *vide* Appendix G.

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23. The intervening days are spent by the proposers of the entertainment in perfecting a song and chorus, which it is intended to perform, and which generally has been composed expressly for the occasion, by some volunteer[1] upon whom also devolves the responsibility of singing the solo and training the so-called chorus. As a considerable amount of distinction among his fellows may be gained by the manner in which he acquits himself in his onerous undertaking, it will be readily understood that the *improvisatore* spares no pains over the preparation and rehearsal of a new song, which, as he fondly hopes, will render his name, if not immortal, at all events famous for many a year. The subject is chosen in reference to some recent personal or tribal exploit or adventure, and is embodied in a distich, followed by a chorus, or rather refrain, which as often as not consists merely in a repetition of the couplet forming the solo; in this refrain women alone are instructed; the main point aimed at is apparently accuracy of time, for, as I have said in my last paper, everything, even sense, is sacrificed in their songs to rhythm.[2]

24. In order to combine pleasure with profit, sundry implements or articles, which are more common in their community than in that of their hosts, are taken by the visitors on these occasions for purposes of presentation, or, to speak more correctly, of barter.

25. It is the duty of the hosts to make all necessary preparations, to provide torches, as well as food and water, for the expected guests, and to sweep the *bū·lum-*,[3] clearing it of all rubbish, lest inconvenience or injury should be occasioned by the stones, shells, bones, &c., which gradually accumulate, in spite of the "kitchen-middens" so invariably found in the vicinity of all permanent encampments of long standing.

26. When nearing the scene of their festivity the visitors pause, for the double purpose of a rehearsal and that the women may have time to adorn the party in their holiday suits of paint, as these would have lost their beauty and freshness if donned previous to leaving home.

27. That a weird and dramatic effect should be produced on a civilised mind by one of these entertainments, especially when occurring at night, will be readily understood if one pictures the scene :—in a small clearing in the midst, or on the border of a dense jungle are gathered a hundred or even more painted

[1] A song that has proved a success at any of these festive tribal meetings is sometimes repeated by "special request" at one of the smaller gatherings; "all rights" in these productions "are reserved," and no one but the composer is at liberty to sing a song, however popular!

[2] *Vide ante* "Language," paragraph 6.

[3] *Vide ante* "Habitations," paragraph 11.

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527 savages of both sexes; the moon sheds a soft light on all, while
574 from each hut the lurid glare of a wood fire throws its fitful
533 shadows across the scattered groups; on one side, seated in a row,
535 are the women who are to join in the refrain; on the other, in dark relief within their several huts, are seen the audience, many of whom assist in marking time by clapping their hands or by slapping the hollow between their outstretched legs with their open palms. In a conspicuous position stands the composer and conductor: with one foot on the pointed end of a sounding board,[1] and supporting himself on a spear, bow, or pole, he gives the time to the singers and dancers by kicking the board with the sole or heel of the other foot; in this wearying duty he is from time to time relieved by one of his male friends and, occasionally, even by a woman. During the solo, which partakes of the character of a "recitative," all other voices are hushed, and the listeners remain motionless, but as soon as the signal is given for the refrain, a number of men emerge suddenly from the gloom surrounding the encampment, and rushing excitedly into the arena, perform their part with frantic energy, generally adding their voices to those of the women to swell the volume of sound. Save at the *ti-tō-latnga-*,[2] women only occasionally take a share in the dances, but their performances are considered by some foreigners as rather suggestive of impropriety—with what justice I am not prepared to say, for modesty, at least, is satisfied by the wearing of a larger leaf apron than usual.

535 28. There is now-a-days[3] but one description of dance in vogue
527 with either sex, but it differs somewhat in the two sexes, and therefore must be dwelt upon briefly.

574 29. A man, when dancing,[4] curves his back, and throws all his weight on one leg, the knee of which is bent; his hands are raised to a level with his chest, and outstretched before him, the thumb of one hand being held between the forefinger and thumb of the other, while the remaining digits are separated and extended upwards;[5] he then advances by sudden jerks and hops

[1] These sounding boards (*pā·kuta-yem·aga-*) somewhat resemble in shape the carapace of a turtle, and might naturally be mistaken by a visitor (*vide* Colebrooke and Mouat) for shields, but I cannot account for Dr. Hodder's description of a "rough skin drum" (*vide* "Pall Mall Budget" of 20th April, 1877). See also Appendix B, item 19.

[2] *Vide ante* "Death and Burial," paragraph 7.

[3] From Lieutenant Colebrooke's description of the Andamanese dance of a hundred years ago, it would seem that since that date their style has undergone a great change, for he says they "dance in a ring, each alternately kicking and slapping his own breech *ad libitum*."

[4] *Vide* Plate III, fig. 2.

[5] Sometimes to heighten the effect a bow and arrow are carried in this position.

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535 taken with the leg on which he is resting, and taps the ground
527 after every second movement with the sole of the other foot;
574 in this manner he crosses and recrosses the entire *bū·lum-*, joining in the chorus as he proceeds, each step being taken in time with the thuds on the sounding-board, and the singing of the refrain. When fatigued, the performer makes a little variation by marking time in a rather odd manner, for the knees are bent, and the *heels* are raised alternately off the ground, the chief point of importance being to maintain the same time throughout.

30. Women, in dancing, swing their arms backwards and forwards; at the same time the knees are bent, and they make a succession of short bobs up and down, in perfect time; every now and then a few steps in advance are taken, and then the action is repeated.

31. To convey an accurate impression of the exact step, or of the effect of the respective performances of the two sexes, is not easy, but I trust that the above descriptions will convey a fair idea of their general character and peculiarities.

533 32. The alternating of solo and chorus continues for many
527 hours, and generally only ceases with the first faint streaks of
574 dawn, when those of the hosts who have managed to keep awake during the long night revel, lead the visitors to the huts they are to occupy, and then themselves sing and dance as a return compliment.

533 33. To a stranger not gifted with a keen ear for music, there is at first a certain amount of attraction in the oft-repeated cadence, but it must be confessed that, after a residence in the neighbourhood of one of the homes, one learns to wish that their musical performances were characterised by a little more variety, and were rather less protracted, though some compensation may be found at night, as the steady continuance of the monotonous sounds has a most soothing and somniferous effect.

34. It seems hardly necessary to say that all their songs are sung in unison, for they have no idea of choral or part-singing, nor are they able to catch up and repeat an air. They appear, however, able to distinguish between various kinds of music, and especially to appreciate the performances of our regimental bands, but this may perhaps in part be due to the tone of the big drum, which somewhat resembles that produced on their sounding-boards.

35. Dr. Brander gives a specimen of their monotonous chant —the compass of which will be found to include only three notes—in the following stave of our musical notation:—

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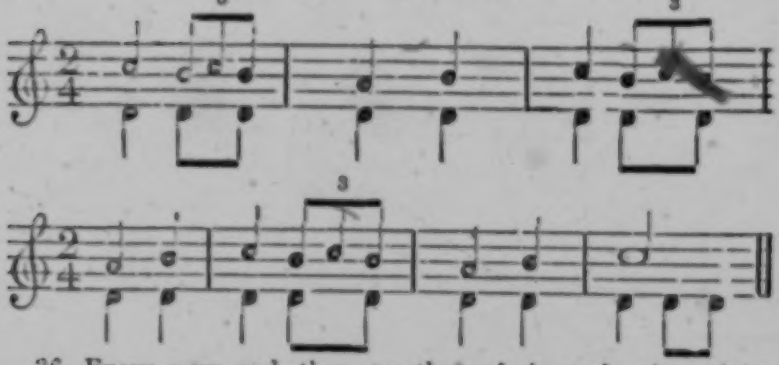

36. Every now and then, as the refrain ends, the soloist cries—

ō·ba eboyū· bē·date,[1] (*a*)

to which the singers respond by shouting—

tēá·re-á·re-á·reá,[1] (*b*)

which seems equivalent to *Tra-la-la*, for it has no meaning *per se*.

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37. When the guests have sufficiently rested from their night's exertions, they visit their special friends or relatives, and, if within the prescribed limits of affinity,[2] indulge[3] in weeping together;[4] these visits are usually followed by an interchange of gifts, the hosts taking the initiative, and a *fracas* not unfrequently ensues, for donor and recipient are not always of a mind as to the respective values of their "presents." Should all, however, pass off smoothly, the assemblage breaks up into various small parties for hunting or fishing, according to the situation of the encampment.

[1] These are styled respectively the (*a*) *àrbē·datnga-*, and the (*b*) *á-rē·anga-* or *àryá·nanga*.

Further, in reference to their musical abilities, I would here quote from a friend, who at my request had kindly consented to test the powers of the aborigines in this particular, as I unfortunately am not qualified to do so myself:—

"I examined five women, seven men, and three young boys as to their musical abilities, and as far as I could judge, they have not the remotest idea of pitch or tune, even the chorus of their own song, *chēklū yá· lak·u mē jrà?* started by *.bó·ra-gud*, was taken up in several keys, and it was difficult to distinguish the original. I tried all the voices separately; it seemed quite accidental if they pitched on the keynote, but as for leaving it when once got hold of to go up and down the scale they *would* not! so that it was impossible for me to ascertain either the quality or the register of the voices. The boys were, if anything, a shade the best; . . . a lot of drilling may beat a few notes into their heads."

[2] *Vide ante* "Customs, Meeting and Parting," paragraph 2.

[3] "The Sandwich Islanders recognise tears as a sign of happiness" (Lubbock, p. 552).

[4] No greetings take place on these occasions between the performers and their hosts until after the entertainment (which often lasts many hours) is over.

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(which has now about 6000 entries of the English-Andamanese part only), and the corrected grammar will be published in course of time. They are obviously of great importance to the Indian Government, on account of its penal settlement at Port Blair, and are well worthy of its patronage.

533 538 195

The Andamanese have poetry, and that of a most remarkable kind. Their only musical instrument is a stamping board to keep time, and to this rhythm everything seems to be sacrificed. The words, their order, the prefixes, the suffixes, the postpositions, are all more or less changed, the order of the words suffers, in short the poetical language requires a special study, which is the more difficult to give, as songs are always impromptu, and not, as a rule, sung again after the one occasion for which they were composed, and then only by the composer. Of the music Mr. Man regrets to state that he is unable to give any information, as he is, unfortunately, totally unacquainted with the subject. The following specimen of a song composed by the *jam·bu*, to whom the above letters were addressed, after his liberation from a six months' imprisonment, about 1865, for having shot down a sailor whom he found taking liberties with his wife, was given to Mr. Man by the author.

I. As it was sung.

Solo. *ngō do kūk l'àrtâ·lagī·ka,*
mô·ro el·ma kâ igbâ·dàla
mô·ro el·mo lē aden·yarà
pô-tôt läh.

Chorus. *aden·yarà pô-tôt läh.*

II. Literal Translation of the Poetry.

thou heart sad
sky surface there look-at
sky surface of ripple
bamboo spear.

[p. 252]

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III. Prose Andamanese Version by Mr. Man.

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ngōl kūk l'àrtâ·lagike
mô·ro el·ma len kâ·to igbâ·dignga bēdig,
mô·ro el·ma lī·a en·yar len igbâ·dignga bēdig
pô-tôg len tūg·imike.

IV. Literal Translation of Prose Version.

thou heart-sad-art
sky-surface to there looking while,
sky-surface of ripple to looking while,
bamboo spear on lean-dost.

V. Free Translation of Prose Version.

thou art sad at heart,
gazing there at the sky's surface,
gazing at the ripple on the sky's surface,
leaning on the bamboo spear.

The rhythm, as read by Mr. Man, was:

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-	-	-

The syllables marked * were of medial length. There were two short syllables at the end of the second and third lines. The three long syllables in the fourth line were very long and slow, each filling up a whole measure. Strange as some of the changes and omissions were, this is one of the least altered of the songs in Mr. Temple's grammar. We must suppose the man to be standing before his companions after liberation from prison, gazing sadly at the sky again and resting on his bamboo spear, and then the action would make the words intelligible.

An important question arises as to the durability of the 000

881 and pointing to a limited tabu. On reaching puberty or thereabouts, between 12 and 16 years of age, abstention from about 6 kinds of food, each in turn, is voluntarily commenced and continued for some years. At the end of each abstention there are a few ceremonies and some dancing and the youth of both sexes become "grown up." There is nothing else to mark this period beyond the application of an honorific name while it lasts, no secret to be communicated, no religious ceremony. In after-life, however, men who have gone through the initiatory period together will not fight, quarrel, nor call each other by name. They will assume great friendship, while avoiding each other with a mutual shyness. The women also practise a limited tabu as to food during menstruation and pregnancy. The idea of tabu does undoubtedly exist as to food and every man has his own tabued articles through life, which is, however, usually something observed to disagree with him in childhood or to be unpalatable.

264 576 There are also limitations as to sexual family relations. Only husband and wife can eat together. Widows and widowers, bachelors and maidens eat with their own sex only. A man may not address directly a married woman younger than himself or touch his wife's sister or the wife of a younger relative, and *vice versâ*.

302 304 The tattooing is partly ceremonial, as a test of courage and endurance of pain, and so is painting the body with clays, oils, etc. By the material and design is shown sickness, sorrow or festivity and the unmarried condition.

535 **Amusements.**—The great amusement of the Andamanese, indeed their chief object in life after the chase, is the formal evening or night dance, a curious monotonous performance accompanied by drumming the feet rythmically on a special sounding board, like a Crusader's shield and mistaken for a shield by several observers, singing a song more or less impromptu and of a compass limited to four semitones and the intermediate quarter tones, and clapping the hands on the thighs in unison. The dance takes place every evening whenever there are enough for it, and lasts for hours and all night at meetings of the tribes or septs for the purpose. It then becomes ceremonial and is continued for several nights in succession. Both sexes take allotted parts in it. This and turtle hunting are the only things which will keep the Andamanese awake all night long. There are five varieties of the dance among the tribes: that of the Onge-Jarawas being an entirely separate performance.

533 **Music.**—The Andamanese appreciate rhythm and time, but not pitch or tune. They sing in unison, but not in parts, and can neither sing in chorus nor repeat or even catch an air. The key in which a solo or chorus is started is quite accidental. They can be readily taught any dance step and can teach it themselves from observation.

Song.—Every man who respects himself is a composer of songs, always consisting of a solo and refrain, and sings without action or gesticulation and always to the same rhythm. The songs relate only to travel, sport and personal adventures, never to love, children and the usual objects of poetry, and very rarely to beliefs and superstition. The wording is enigmatic and excessively elliptic, the words themselves being in grammatical order, but shorn of all affixes as a rule. As in all poetry unusual words are employed. But clipped as the wording is and prosaic as the subjects are, the Andamanese are far from being unable to give a poetic turn to their phraseology and ideas. The women have lullabies for their babies.

524 **Games.**—The Andamanese are childishly fond of games and have an indigenous blind-man's-buff, leap-frog and hide-and-seek. Mock pig and turtle hunts, mock burials, and "ghost" hunts are favourite sports. Matches in swinging, swimming, throwing, skimming (ducks and drakes), shooting (archery), and wrestling are practised.

551 **Naming of Children and Adults.**—Every child is named for life after one of about twenty conventional names by the mother, of course without reference to sex, immediately upon pregnancy becoming evident, to which afterwards a nickname, varying occasionally as life proceeds, is added from personal peculiarities, deformities, disfigurements, or eccentricities and sometimes from flattery or reverence. Girls are also given "flower names" after one of sixteen selected trees which happen to be in flower at the time they reach

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

the felling of the tree, chiselling the lumber and processing it further to give the shape of a canoe. Buckets of wood are also constructed by them from the softwood tree. Two types of baskets are made, the smaller ones are more well-finished than the bigger ones. The former is known as *toleoaga* and the later *tole-laya*. Such activities have introduced the use of dahs, chisels, and iron files among the Onges, from the iron pieces derived from the sea shores. The other important pieces of their craftsmanship are the beautiful weavings of fibre, tussel of yellow fibre used by the women in their front. However, the art of making the earthen pots has been completely forgotten.

The leisure in their lives has helped the development of some amount of aesthetic senses among the Onges. All the Onges men and women shave their heads with flakes of glass, obtained from the sea-borne glass bottles. The body of the Onges are also painted with white clay which save their skin from insect-bite while red paint serves medicinal purposes if some individual is having fever. In times of mourning, red orchre paint is a taboo.[1]

Early marriage is the custom. The widows are looked down upon by the society. Some incidents of widow murder and drowning are heard. In the married life, the husband is devoted to his wife and both the husband and wife work for collecting their food.

Dances and songs are in vogue and there are practically songs for every occasion and activity. Most of their songs are more plaintive than joyous.

There are three broad divisions of the Onges of the Little Andaman :

(1) *Giremeka-Gobeule* group inhabiting the northeastern coast of the island ;

(2) *Engakwale group* live in the interior of the islands ; and

(3) *Gireraragobeule group* live in the southern and western coasts of the islands.

In spite of all the limitations, the Onges have been considered as one of the happiest people of the world with plenty of food and water to eat and drink and with very few social cankers to fight with. But as is common to all other aborigines of the Andamans, a decline in their number is discernible.

The Sentinelese

The Sentinelese are the least known of all the aborigines of the Anda-

1 The Onge of the Little Andaman—A short guide book ; Anthropological Gallery, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

rule the multiplication and growth of the various animals and plants useful to Man.

The Onges do not love Eiuga, or any of the other spirits. They merely fear them, and seek to evade their anger by various expedients. It is curious that they never hesitate to try and deceive the spirits and think themselves very clever when they manage to steal roots or tubers from the ground. Nor do they revere the spirits of their ancestors; these are to be feared and propitiated by preservation of their bones. By definition none of the spirits, since they can be deceived by simple tricks, can be all-powerful, but this conclusion, simple though it is, is still beyond the Onges' powers of reasoning.

The Onges' fear of the dead is instanced by their carrying round their necks the *ibidanghe*, or necklet of human jaws, as a propitiation. The wearing of the bones prevents the spirit from going away (by analogy the bones of dead enemies are burned to force the spirit, clearly a hostile one, to leave the place). The custom of burial within the communal hut follows the same logic – the spirits of the dead are kept near their bones and hence near their relatives, to help them in the daily round of hunting, fishing and gathering food.[1]

Unlike most of the other peoples whose burial customs are even today based on their underlying principles, the Onges have not progressed beyond the stage of relating the dead directly to the demands of daily life; they have no 'practices' of any kind, no concept at all of holy places, prayers or images. Even the very names of the dead are soon forgotten. Their fears, however, are none the less very real. They do not like to speak of Eiuga or even of the lesser spirits, for fear of attracting their attention.

The Onges have no stories or explanatory legends, like those reported by Brown for Great Andaman. They have only short epics, if such they may be called, recalling extraordinary events in

[1] This belief is of very remote origin, and can be traced back at least to the megaliths of southern Asia, like the splendid ones which I was able to photograph, among others, in the mountains of Travancore. Here again the object was to prevent the dead from leaving their relatives. Similar ideas are found today in India among several tribes, notably the Munda, or Nias, and among various peoples of Indonesia, and even Oceania. The rituals are probably followed today without any understanding of their meaning or symbolism; the details vary from place to place, but the underlying principle, the original fear, remains the same everywhere.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

their hunting and fishing, or contacts with strangers, which are loudly chanted, accompanied by miming and dancing, during their nocturnal celebrations. One was sung and danced in my honour; Cendubai,[1] head of the Lulera hut, much struck by the sight of me in my hammock slung between two trees on nylon cords, delivered himself of a warning over the danger I was running using such thin cords. At the end of each 'verse' the refrain '*cué-cian-ghéghecbée-chéle*' (he will hurt himself) repeated his fear of the cords breaking.

Hunting and fishing episodes are to the Onges less interesting than themes like my safety, because to them they lack the repetitive refrain. In their dances, on the other hand, they prefer something else, to us monotonous, but for them always new, and even exciting; more than anything they love to dance the stages of courtship to its culmination, with the help of words and extraordinarily (to Western eyes regrettably) vivid gestures.

Birds, to the Onges, harbour the spirits of the dead, and it is for this reason that they are never eaten, contrary to the assertions of Brown.[2] Similar fears extend to lizards, the jungle cats, bats, rats and snakes. I have confirmed this among both the Onges and the Arioto. The latter even refused to eat some fat pigeons which I offered them not knowing of the taboo; they accepted the gifts, but the pigeons were eventually eaten by my own men. And the Onges whom I took with me to Port Blair for a few days refused point blank to eat pigeon or chicken.

The spirits select the Onges' food for them, in the sense that they regard everything as edible or poisonous, according to whether the guardian spirit is benign or malevolent. Given the curious adaptability of the spirits and the intensely practical way in which they operate it is hardly surprising that their benevolence or malignity coincides remarkably well with those foods which tend to promote normal health!

[1] I was sorry to learn that Cendubai died suddenly in 1955 aged barely forty.

[2] Curiously enough, while the Onges' fears lead them to reject out of hand any food of animal origin which is unknown to them, the same does not apply to vegetable foods. They [illegible] half-rotten fruit, which I offered them, even though they had never seen it before, and they clamoured for rice and tea, so much so that in order to prevent them becoming addicted to the rice, as so often happens when primitive peoples meet a new food, I insisted on receiving equal quantities of yams in exchange for the rice and very sweet tea, to slow down their demands.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Even the unique dances enjoyed by the Onges are to be seen among the Jarawas, with the characteristic marking of the rhythm by slapping the calves against the buttocks. This does not seem to have been a feature of the Arioto dances, in which the rhythm was by the *pukuta yemnga*, a kind of convex shield made of the very hard and aromatic red wood (*Pterocarpus dalbergoides*) which the termites never seem to attack. I was able to obtain one of these shields, the last that the twenty-three surviving Arioto possessed and the only musical instrument in the islands. It is played by one man with his feet, while the dancers, male and female, form lines on each side of him a short distance away. Before use the convex face is decorated with lines of white ochre and chains of tusk shells are hung from a hole at the end opposite to the one on which the player's feet beat; from the same hole runs a cord, which he holds in his hand to prevent the instrument moving away from him as he beats. The players change from time to time as the dancers shuffle on and on for hours in the light of the resin torches. But apart from the instrument itself, the rhythmic hand-clapping and the dancers singing in unison are the same throughout the Andamans.

The women clap their hands in rhythm, and then slap one thigh with the open palm of one hand, the other hand clasping the wrist, singing all the time. The men dance in Indian file, beating the ground first with the right heel, then with the left, the toes barely raised from the ground, moving a short way forward each time. As they dance they lean forward, then with hands clasped and their fingers interlaced. There are variations, but the basic step is always the same.

One difference between the Onges and the Jarawas is that in the latter both sexes are naked, while the Onge women have in recent times adopted the *naquineghe* or apron. Complete nudity was a characteristic of all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aetà, and the Jarawa migrations probably took place before the introduction of the *naquineghe*.

The present inability of the three peoples to understand each other is more a question of pronunciation than of difference in actual words. To examine the question fully it would be necessary to collect a large number of words and analyse their affinity; meanwhile we know that despite their inability to understand each other there is a close resemblance between the language of the Jarawas and Sentinellese and that of the Onges. Strict isolation can lead to